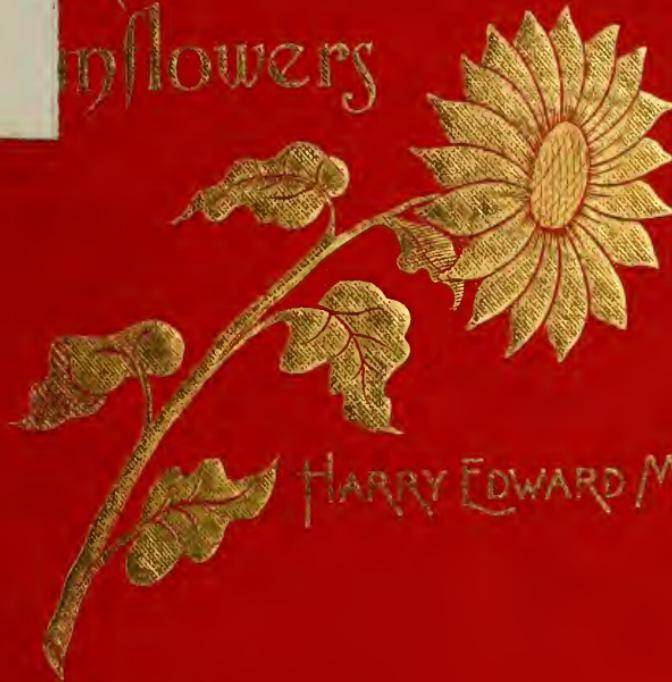
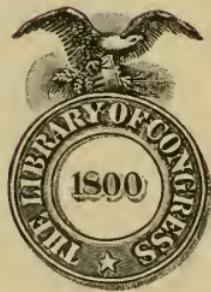


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VERY SELECT SUNFLOWERS.

# SELECT SUNFLOWERS.

BY

HARRY EDWARD MILLS.

"

FORT SCOTT, KANSAS:  
THE SUNFLOWER PRESS.

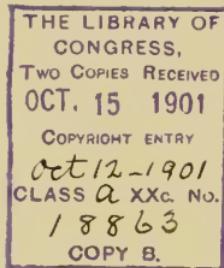
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WILLIAM H. MILL

WILLIAM H. MILL

1901  
MONITOR PRINTING COMPANY.  
FORT SCOTT, KANS.

TO

MY WIFE

WHOSE CHEERING WORDS HAVE BEEN THE

INSPIRATION OF THIS BOOK, IT IS

WITH DEEPEST AFFECTION

DEDICATED.



## PROEM.

A poem is a dream enmeshed  
In music's measured chime ;  
A spirit once again enfleshed  
In feeling, sense and time.

A poem is a cry of pain ;  
A doubt, a sigh, a tear ;  
A lost Elysium, a vain  
Regret, or foolish fear.

A poem is a shout of joy,  
A pæan of delight :  
The gold of life without alloy,  
The bliss without the blight.

A poem is celestial sense,  
In earthly imagery.  
'Tis music, art and eloquence  
Engulfed in minstrelsy.



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## SELECT SUNFLOWERS.

---

### SERENADE OF THE SUNFLOWERS.

We are the original settlers,  
And this is our commonwealth ;  
We ever shall claim  
    Both the name  
        And the fame  
Which the squatter has taken by stealth.

We came with the elk and the cactus ;  
Not yet was the Indian here ;  
And still we remain  
    Though the grain  
        Of the plain  
Has banished the bison and deer.

We never would yield to invasion,  
Though enemies thickened around.  
When corn, wheat and rye  
    Raised their high  
    Battle cry  
We laughed at their blusterous sound.

We cheered when the plowman attacked  
    us:  
His furrows we hailed with delight.  
Wherever he trod  
    Every rod  
    Of his sod  
We seized as a prize of the fight.

The Sun is our gallant defender;  
We thrive in his furious glow:  
Then withers the maize  
    In the blaze  
    Of his rays,  
But we only flourish and grow.

They wanted a title for Kansas,  
A title resplendent and great ;  
A name  
That should shaine  
Every claim  
To her fame ;  
So they called her the Sunflower State.

## SUBMISSION.

“Good by,” he whispered, “all, good by ;  
It is God’s way, His will be done.”\*  
With choking rage and streaming eye,  
A nation mourns her murdered son.

What vision, O beloved Chief,  
Is flashed before thy closing eye ?  
Is God in this, the whole world’s grief,  
And is it best that thou should’st die ?

Thou goest where we all must go,  
But how untimely seems thine end—  
So crushing, for we loved thee so,  
Great President and greater friend.

The first fell shock had worn away,  
And hope was rising clear and bright,  
When suddenly the glow of day  
Became the awful gloom of night.

\*Dying words of President McKinley.

O for a faith serene as thine !  
O for thy calmness in it all ;  
That we, too, might our will resign  
To Him who marks each sparrow's fall.

With faltering voice we make reply  
To thy farewell, O martyred one,  
“Good by, Beloved Chief, good by,  
It is God's way, His will be done.”

## THE GLASS A-WRY.

I sometimes watch from a busy store  
The people, as they pass,  
Diminish and expand before  
A wry-faced window glass.

They hasten on their sober ways,  
And none among them knows  
What acrobatic pranks and plays  
His image undergoes.

And I am always saddened when  
This travesty I see ;  
It brings a grievous fault of men  
So forcibly to me.

For men discard the lens of love,  
And look through prejudice ;  
They see the man they're thinking of  
Distorted much like this.

And thus am I misunderstood,  
What wonder I am sad !  
The very acts I mean for good,  
They misconstrue as bad.

But some there be who understand,  
Rare prophets, vision eyed;  
With these I labor hand in hand,  
Or suffer side by side.

## SHOVELLING SNOW.

Sparkling eyes, cheeks aglow,  
See him shovelling through the snow.  
Few will tread his opened way,  
None his labors will repay;

Hear him humming soft and low,  
As he shovels in the snow.

At a humble window see  
Picture fair as fair can be ;  
Maidenhood in rustic bloom  
Standing by an idle broom.

How the blushes come and go  
As she sees the flying snow.

Simple hearts so young and warm,  
Love has taken you by storm.  
May the winters as they roll,  
Closer bind you soul to soul ;  
May your heaven here below  
Be as spotless as the snow.

## THE RAILROAD MAN.

Three cheers I say for the railroad  
man,  
The man whose nerves of steel  
Brave death as only a hero's  
can,  
With every turn of the wheel.

The hazard of the rail is rife  
With greater risk than war ;  
The Mauser takes one noble life,  
The grinding wheels a score.

The service, better year by year,  
Is pushed with keenest vim ;  
Yet new conveniences come dear  
In railroad life and limb.

Excessive hours have grown in  
length,  
Till Nature fairly reels ;  
While flesh and blood exhaust their  
strength—  
And then the deadly wheels.

Responsibility and risk  
Confront him all the while.  
What wonder he is brief and brisk,  
In honest soldier style ?

His heart how fearless, warm,  
sincere,  
His handshake how intense.  
And what a head, so cool and  
clear  
In sudden exigence.

His faith and trust in man beget  
A faith in God as well,  
What railroad man was ever yet  
At heart an infidel ?

No better friend on earth than he,  
No more unflinching foe ;  
With honest need how kind and free,  
How harsh with sham and show.

Then cheer the heroes of the rail,  
Befriend them if in need ;  
The Knighthood of the grimy mail,  
The Chivalry of speed.

## TWILIGHT THOUGHTS.

A little evening prayer, a little bed ;  
Two tired little feet, two heavy eyes ;  
Soft pillow'd on my breast a curly head ;  
Forgetfulness bewitched with lullabies.  
I kiss the dimpled cheeks then fondly stray  
Across the mem'ry meadows of the day.

What trifles filled my darling's heart with  
grief,  
What simpler trifles turned it into joy;  
A little fall brought tears, a kiss relief,  
He offered scarf and mittens for a toy.  
He talked all day about his cherished plan,  
To be when grown an organ-grinder  
man.

Sleep lays my riper follies by awhile :  
Does God recount them then and fondly  
smile ?

## MY EPITAPH.

O do not rear for me a granite shaft,  
With massive base and heaven-piercing  
peak ;  
On which the sculptor's steel shall deftly  
graft  
Kind semi-falsehoods none would care  
to speak.

But let a simple slab with name and date  
Point out my resting place to friend and  
foe ;  
And should I merit rank among the great  
Shame not the modest stone by saying so.

But rather let my memory be read ;  
Let men look round them or inspect within.  
There let them find the praises of their dead,  
There let encomium end and begin.

Let me be monumented thus in love,  
And I am sure that peace, serene and deep,  
Will rule my spirit in the realms above,  
When God shall give to His beloved sleep.

## THE TWO JOHNS.

Big John and Little John,  
See them trudge and shuffle on;  
Overgrown and undersize,  
Sleepy eyes and sparkling eyes;  
    Black as night,  
    Lilly white,  
What a droll and charming sight.

Big John is twenty-one,  
Full of clumsy mirth and fun ;  
Does the chores around the place,  
Has the full moon for his face ;  
    Earth and skies  
    Idolize  
Little John in Big John's eyes.

Little John is nearly four,  
Owns a steamboat, keeps a store,  
Runs a circus, drives a hack,  
Has a railroad, train and track.  
Wants his hat,  
Ball and bat,  
Big John's little autocrat.

Little John and Big John,  
Each the other's paragon ;  
Partners in a thousand things,  
Happy both of them as kings ;  
Comic pair,  
Swart and fair,  
Yet together everywhere.

## THE BANEFUL GIFT.

“Sing,” says Adolphus, and the minstrel sings.

The soldiers barely lift their gloomy eyes.  
But soon the magic voice and wizard strings,  
Re-arm defeat with hopes of fresh emprise.

“Amazing!” cried the king, “in vain I sought

To move my men as you their zeal inspire ;  
Accept this jewel, with a kingdom bought,  
And yet scarce meet for one of Heaven’s choir.

“Sing, mighty minstrel, thine enraptured voice

Should rouse the heavy hearted far and near.

Let sorrow ‘neath thy soothing spell rejoice,  
And let despair make way for hope and cheer.”

Again the singer raised his voice to sing,  
Again pealed forth the strains surpassing  
sweet.

But disappointment fell on court and king ;  
The mystic charm was somehow incomplete.

For ever and anon the restless eye  
Would fasten on that jewel fair as dawn.  
And then, as if the blue should fail the sky,  
A subtle something from the song was gone.

Days passed away : the gifted bard became  
An empty dreamer o'er a priceless stone ;  
Till scarce a spark remained of that rare  
flame  
Which lately with such wondrous light had  
shone.

“ Mine, mine the fault ! ” exclaimed the  
troubled king.

He turned and gave an order to his men :  
“ Take from the bard that rare and costly  
thing ! ”

Then, then the singer sang with power again.

## MOVING ON.

My old horse is the biggest fool  
Running loose on God's footstool.  
Neighbors say so too, when they  
See him browsing 'long the way.  
Grass all round him everywhere,  
He just nibbles here and there;  
Always moving on and on  
Like some fool automaton.  
Nothing left but skin and bones ;  
Looks as if he lived on stones.  
Might as well look sleek and neat  
If he'd just stand still and eat.

Well, perhaps he ain't to blame,  
Since his owner does the same.  
Forty years I've moved around;  
Never liked no place I found.  
I could stay a year or so ;  
Then I'd have to pack and go.

Never was no hand to shirk,  
If I got a job of work.  
Saved my money, too, but then  
When I moved it went again.

So I reckon I have spent  
Thousands if I have a cent,  
Moving — moving here and there,  
Not contented anywhere.  
Now I'm almost sixty-three,  
Just as poor as I can be.  
Never owned a foot of ground,  
Never will until I'm found  
Resting in my little lot,  
With a slab to mark the spot.  
'Fraid I'll find it hard to lay  
Till the Resurrection day  
In the same place under ground,  
Wish they'd let me move around;  
Habits' got so strong with me,  
'Spect its always goin' to be.

So betwixt me and my horse,  
I'm the biggest fool of course.

Both of us is old and set,  
Can't expect we'll ever get  
Out of this unsettled state  
Long as we can navigate.

Cluck, go-lang, Old Rough and Tough!  
We've been round here long enough.

## THE INVASION OF WINTER.

King Winter came storming and blustering  
forth ;  
Rigorous, boisterous, bold ;  
His chargers the hail and the sleet of the  
North,  
His lash the implacable cold.

With snow for his mail and with wind for  
his sword,  
He fell on the shelterless sheep ;  
While the last rose left blooming of Sum-  
mer's vast horde,  
Lay numbed in her last icy sleep.

Wherever he drove in tempestuous might,  
All Nature acknowledged his sway ;  
The stream in its channel stood still with  
affright,  
The beast and the bird hied away.

Man fled to his castle and bolted his door,  
Then doubled his armor of wool.  
Old Boreas mocked him with shriek and  
with roar ;  
And charged like a furious bull.

Thus Winter invaded the breadth and the  
length  
Of Summer's deserted domain,  
With insolent boast and invincible strength  
He set up his tyrannous reign.

Yet even his madness a method confessed,  
And beauty enshrouded his blight ;  
For all the bleak landscape he lavishly  
dressed  
In robes of immaculate white.

He paved for the coaster the slope of the  
hill,  
Congealed for the skater the lake ;  
The music of sleighbells, long silent and  
still,  
He sent over woodland and brake.

Where blushes and maidenhood temptingly  
met,

Where beauty his boldness excused,  
His kiss left rare loveliness lovelier yet,  
With the glow of Aurora suffused.

He tapped on the window with delicate  
touch,

He etched from invisible plan  
Fantastic festoonings and draperies such  
As never were fashioned by man.

And thus far and wide this estheticist stern  
His frigid dominion ordained.

His subjects, dismayed and delighted by  
turn,

Now praised him, now loudly com-  
plained.

But little cared he for approval or blame,  
His heart was as cold as his head.

He reigned undisturbed till the Spring  
cohorts came,  
Then raging and raving he fled.

## WHEN THE HOUSE KEEPS IN ORDER ALL DAY.

When the house keeps in order all day,  
No chairs overturned on the floor,  
No rocking horse left in the way,  
No wagon obstructing the door;  
No fragments of cookie or cake,  
No traces of frolicsome play,  
The heart strings of Motherhood break  
When the house keeps in order all day.

When the house keeps in order all day,  
No homely rag doll left around,  
No pictures in scattered array,  
No toys on the floor to be found,  
No babyhood bruises and aches  
For Papa to frolic away;  
What wonder a father's heart breaks,  
When the house keeps in order all day.

When the house keeps in order all day,  
The soul has a right to lament,  
Grief then holds legitimate sway,  
And tears in compassion are sent.  
But if in Elysian love  
Our lost ones are only away,  
Then, Heart, there is solace above,  
When the house keeps in order all day.

## THE EARLY FROGS.

O, I love to hear the frogs  
When they first begin to sing;  
How they vocalize the bogs,  
And vociferate the Spring.  
How they carrol as they croak,  
How they mingle jest and joke  
With their solemn chant and dirge  
On the river's slimy verge.

O, I love to hear the frogs,  
For their monotone uncouth  
Is the music of the cogs  
Of the mill wheel of my youth.  
And I listen half asleep,  
And the eyes of mem'ry peep  
Through the bars that hold me fast,  
From the pleasures of the past.

O, I love to hear the frogs,  
For their melody is health  
To the heart that worry flogs  
With the lash of want or wealth.  
And the cares of life take wing,  
And its pleasures lose their sting,  
And love's channel way unclogs  
In the croaking of the frogs.

## THE YELLOW DOG.

Not the dog with yellow fur,  
And with yellow sounding yelp;  
Not the quadripedal cur,  
Not the flea infested whelp.

But the yellow biped wretch,  
Who invents the yellow trash,  
Which the yellow papers stretch,  
Into yellow balderdash.

He's the yellow dog I mean,  
And his vitriolic pen  
Bites with hydrophobic spleen,  
In the crowded haunts of men.

How he chuckles, how he gloats,  
Over crime and dark despair ;  
How his very pencil notes  
Horrify the pitying air !

And his dream of paradise  
Is a place where, thick and fast,  
Horrors and sensations rise,  
Each more awful than the last.

So, to Heavenize the earth  
With a Hell of dread dismay ;  
And to compensate the dearth  
Of the direful day by day ;  
  
Seizes he some trivial act,  
Born at some unguarded time,  
Builds upon this molehill fact  
Mountains of suspected crime.

None is safe with him around,  
For the most untarnished name  
And the purest virtue found  
He is keenest to defame.

He has lost all sense of truth,  
Falsehood is his very breath,—  
Calumny his meat, forsooth  
What to him is life or death ?

But the incensed public cries:  
“Outrage, thou hast done thy  
worst!  
Justice, veil no more thine eyes!  
Vengence, let thy fury burst!”

And the yellow dog turns pale,  
For in dread alarm he hears  
Of a dog who lost his tail  
Just behind his yellow ears.

## ON A RAINY NIGHT.

My love tonight is far away;  
And I am sad and lonely;  
My restive spirit night and day  
Is longing for her only.

I see her in my fondest moods,  
She haunts the parlor hallway;  
And yet her form my clasp eludes,  
Her lips my kisses alway.

But soon our lives will intertwine,  
As now our loves are blended;  
For I am hers and she is mine,  
Till life and love are ended.

## WHEN BABY CRIES.

'Tis hard to go away from home  
When Baby cries ;  
To see the drops of pearly grief  
In his dear eyes;

To hear the echo of his voice  
Far down the street,  
Sobs choking back the farewell words  
So sad and sweet.

All day the loving sound returns  
To memory's ear ;  
And now and then I brush away  
Myself a tear.

For troubrous thoughts sometimes  
attempt  
My dark alarm :  
"Perchance my darling boy to-day  
Will meet with harm!"

A moment only, then I drive  
The fear away ;  
Full well I know the angels guard  
Him night and day.

And when at dusk I come again  
His shout of glee  
Repays the morning debt of pain  
To him and me.

## INSTRUCTING KITTY ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

Listen, Kitty, while I tell you  
'Bout old Santa Claus.  
Stop your purring, lie real quiet,  
Fold your frisky paws.

Are you ready? Well, in Greenland  
Where it's always cold,  
Santa has a big toy garden  
Full as it will hold

Of doll-trees and doll-clothes bushes,  
Little cradle vines,  
Thimble plants and needle grasses,  
Ribbon elms and pines;

Little wash tubs on the willows,  
Little wringers too,  
Little stoves and little dishes,  
Doll-beds white and blue.

Everywhere there's lots of candy,  
Even on the ground;  
Candy rats and mice and rabbits  
Running all around.

When its Christmas Eve Old Santa  
With his deer and sled  
Brings us lots and lots of presents  
After we're in bed.

But tonight he's coming early,—  
O the things he'll bring!  
Listen! You can hear his sleighbells  
Ting-a-ling-a-ling.

## A PLEA FOR THE KICKER.

Don't kick the kicker, let him be ;  
Some other things are worse than he :  
The chintz bug, or the rattlesnake,  
The drought, the flood, the awful quake  
Of heaving continents that show  
The molten fury pent below.

Don't kick the kicker, let him tear  
His own and other people's hair.  
It doesn't hurt them very much,  
And as for him it offers such  
Relief and comfort just to rave,  
That he who stops him is a knave.

Don't kick the kicker, let him fuss,  
He's kicking for the rest of us.  
We haven't time to fume and fret  
Because it's hot, cold, dry or wet.  
We haven't time to howl and whine  
At every mercantile combine.

And who of us would waste his wits  
Exposing stenchy hypocrites!  
We need our muscle and our brain  
For raising other kinds of cane.  
However fate and fortune mix  
Let's let the kickers make our kicks.

Don't kick the kicker, let *him* kick  
It's wiser and more politic.  
For kickers might be doing worse  
Than kicking at the Universe.  
They might be forcing other folks  
To laugh at vapid puns and jokes.

They might be moving Heaven and earth  
To bring some foolery to birth;  
Might go and swell the crowded ranks  
Of wild vagarians and cranks,  
Whose heads re-echo with the sound  
Of wheels that rattle round and round.

So, lest the harmless kicker might  
Invent some black that should be white;

Some under that should be above;  
Some hatred just as good as love;  
Some health with which to slay the sick—  
Its better just to let him kick.

## GRANDMA PAYS THE BILL.

Before the busy merchant  
Stood pretty little Bess.  
"I want some cloff for dollie,  
Enough to make a dwess."

"What color? little lady!"  
The pleasant dealer said.  
"Why, don't you know?" she  
answered,  
"I want it awful red."

He smiled and cut the fabric  
For the delighted Miss.  
"What does it cost?" she ques-  
tioned.

He answered, "Just one kiss."

And then the clerks who heard  
her  
Went roaring up and down.  
"My Dran'ma said she'd pay you  
Next time she tomes up town."

## INTERCHANGED.

We wandered by the willows  
My little love and I;  
Beside the crested billows,  
Beneath the jewelled sky.

Our troth had long been spoken,  
Our nuptial day long set;  
But now my voice was broken,  
And her fair cheek was wet.

One fear, one bitter feeling—  
Each fully understood:  
A cannon's cruel pealing,  
A maiden's widowhood!

She whispered as we parted  
With anguished trembling sigh,  
“I live, but broken hearted,  
You go away to die.”

I went away to battle;  
Faced bayonet and ball,  
Where men like herded cattle  
By thousands fight and fall.

Yet not a mark I carried,  
When mustered out of strife;  
And not an hour I tarried  
From her my soul, my life.

Home, home at last! —Ah, sorrow.  
A bell bewailed the dead.  
“With joy ’twill ring tomorrow  
When she and I are wed,”

“When she and I are married!”  
I waited by the tract,  
The mourner’s carriage carried  
Her mother past in black.

She read my face and nodded.  
I staggered, dumb with grief.  
“O grave, untimely sodded!  
O Death, relentless thief!”

Lost loved one, thy forebodings  
Were merely disarranged;  
For me thou felt their goadings,  
But we are interchanged.

## THE WELCOME FAULT.

I knew a man of massive mold,  
I hung upon his every word ;  
He made the truth so clear and bold  
I wished that angels might have heard.

I buttressed hope and banished fear  
With his strong faith, my own was dim.  
A fierce temptation ventured near;  
It fled before the thought of him.

So masterful his giant will,  
So keen his logic, pure his breast,  
My admiration grew until  
His very excellence oppressed.

Must I beside the Christ exalt  
This man and worship at his feet ?  
Thank God, I found one day a fault ;  
And then his *manhood* seemed complete.

## IN MARCH.

A tyrant hears birth tidings of a child,  
Whom prophecy has destined for his throne;  
With mingled scorn and apprehension wild,  
He vows her death or ever she be grown.

He summons all his fury and assails  
With frigid wrath the sweet and fragile maid,  
His cruel art mysteriously fails;  
Her very youth protects her from his blade.

And see, his onslaught is his own defeat;  
For Nature's gallant Knighthood charges forth—  
The Sun and South Wind and the Early Heat—  
And drive him to his fastness in the North.

Thus fades one Monarch in another's dawn;  
While man and nature with glad voices sing:  
“ Begone, King Winter, may you long begone!  
All hail beloved Queen, the virgin Spring.”

J. G. HOLLAND.

And did he say, "more human, more divine  
Is womankind than man may hope to be,  
When his own virtues and his verse combine  
To prove none choicer on the earth than he ?

He offers woman his sincerest praise;  
A tribute artless, unaffected, sweet;  
When, all unconscious of himself, he lays  
Himself and all his sex before her feet.

O, magic-lyrist, we of lesser touch  
Would tune our harps to thine exalted key ;  
That we might eulogize her just as much  
In this: "more human, more divine than *we.*"

## THE DREAMLAND SHORE.

Safe on the Dreamland Shore,  
Bathed by its dream-tossed tide;  
Resting his dream-dipped oar  
There at the dream-sea side;  
Baby has left his play,  
Lured on by dreamland lore,  
Till he is far away,  
Safe on the Dreamland Shore.

Now where the dream-bells chime,  
Softly from dream-lit towers;  
Heedless of dream-winged time,  
Soothed by dream-scented flowers;  
Rest, little boatman, rest,  
Half way to Heaven once more;  
Thou art the dream-god's guest,  
There on the Dreamland Shore.

Stay till the morning breaks,  
Breaks from the bars of night;  
Stay till the robin wakes,  
Wakes with the new born light.  
Then lift thine anchor aft,  
Then raise thy canvas fore,  
Dream-winds thy sails will waft  
Back from the Dreamland Shore.

## A BOY IN LOVE.

When verdant fancies first enshrine  
Fair maidenhood in dreams divine,  
The awkward graces of the youth  
Are signboards setting forth the truth.

His dingy shoes your glances greet  
Like mirrors fastened to his feet.  
His hair he curries and he clears  
The real estate from out his ears.  
His finger nails obtain relief  
From their insignia of grief.

His buttonholes no longer stare  
Untenanted from everywhere.  
But seedy coat and grimy vest  
Give way before his Sunday best.  
His cap, the darling of his heart,  
Is told that bosom friends must part;  
And in its place a stylish hat  
Smiles down upon his loud cravat.

His manners also come to life ;  
He eats no longer with his knife.  
His hands bear evidence of soap ;  
He ceases saying " Yep " and " Nope. "  
He catches cold and, strange to say,  
A handkerchief comes into play.  
He tramples on some lady's toe,  
But begs her pardon bowing low.  
In short an outlaw, reckless, wild,  
Is Evolution's favored child ;  
And by an unsuspected plan  
There comes to light the gentleman.

The force is ancient as the race  
By which this miracle takes place.  
The magic talisman thereof  
Is simply this — a lover's love.

The sages tell us love is blind :  
Perhaps he is, but he can find  
With wondrous certainty the best  
That slumbers in the youthful breast.

## BY AND BY.

O the charms of "By and By,"  
In a world of toil and gloom.  
Like a glory-tinted sky  
Rise they o'er the wrecks of doom.

When the heart is bowed with grief,  
"By and By" brings sweet relief.

"By and By" is all the hope  
Of the man who blunders on;  
In its vast and boundless scope,  
In its hither and its yon,  
All he strove for low or high  
Will be given him "By and By."

"By and By" is Heaven's Nurse  
Soothing earth's unhappy child;  
How she turns us from life's worse  
To its better; and beguiled  
Is the heart and ear and eye  
With thy croonings "By and By."

O bewitching "By and By,"  
Loved enchantress of the race,  
Thou canst silence any sigh,  
Build air castles any place.  
Be they truth or be they lie,  
Sweet thine accents, "By and By."

"By and By," O "By and By,"  
What were life without thy boon?  
Hopes deferred on thee rely,  
As November sighs for June.  
O delights that cannot die:  
"By and By," O "By and By."

## CONVICTED.

O Justice, how canst thou endure the sight  
Of human devils turning black to white,  
Or white to black—and branding it “the right” !

It happened that a wealthy man was slain.  
The murderer escaped, but left a stain  
Of dark suspicion on an humble swain.

The Law put prison bars around the youth—  
A lank and lumbering foreigner uncouth—  
Until the courts might ascertain the truth.

The State’s Attorney saw with skillful glance  
How he could make the threads of fact and chance  
A net-work of convicting circumstance

About the luckless stranger; yet he knew  
That what he “proved” would have to be untrue.  
And as he sat and pondered what to do,

A letter reached him from a distant friend :  
" The corporation is about to send  
A man to hear you. He will recommend

Some shrewd attorney for that vacant place  
At twenty thousand ; you are in the race.  
Don't let your rival dust you in the face."

That letter sealed the young defendant's fate.  
" He's got to be convicted !" cried the " State."  
" Ye Gods !" he chuckled, " lazy luck, but  
great ! "

The case was called, the war of wits began;  
The gaping crowd was brightened by one man  
Who closely watched the State's unfolding plan.

Day after day he came, and on his face  
The court room loafers thought that they could  
trace  
A deep concern for the defendant's case.

Not so the State's Attorney, for he knew  
What end the keen-eyed stranger had in view ;  
And all his skill into the fight he threw.

He took the opposition by surprise.  
The Judge and jury sat with bulging eyes,  
As link by link he forged his chain of lies.

He dared not fix his observation base  
Upon the anguish of the prisoner's face  
When like a fiend he crushed him in disgrace.

But with a stormy conscience in his breast,  
He paced about in ill-concealed unrest,  
Yet "proved" the swain a murderer self-confessed.

The verdict, "murder in the first degree."  
The sentence, "death by hanging," and the fee,  
Won by the "State"—that tempting vacancy.

Such fortune brought him hosts of fawning friends,  
That polished social riff-raff which attends  
Upon the heels of all who win their ends.

And for a time the lucky man forgot,  
With all this siren stuff and blarney rot,  
The victim of his heartless underplot.

Till once in sleep he seemed within a cell,  
A burning dungeon. Then he thought he fell,  
From off a gallows to the depths of Hell.

The morning broke, and with his waking breath  
He cried: "O Justice, how thou blundereth !  
I must prevent that boy's atrocious death."

But faulty recollection now held sway,  
He thought the fatal farce a month away  
Whereas the youth was hanged that very day.

And when the awful headlines caught his eye—  
"Upon the gallows he would still deny  
His guilt, but yet he had to die"—

His eye grew glassy and his knees grew weak;  
A friend addressed him, when he tried to speak  
He dropped his paper with a smothered shriek.

Thenceforth the world became a Hell for him ;  
The air grew stifling and the sunlight dim ;  
His friends were monsters, hollow-eyed and grim.

He wandered to a lonely spot one day.  
In agony he tried and tried to pray,  
But every bird and insect seemed to say :

“ ‘Tis he, the cursed Cain ! behold his brand,  
His guilty eye, the blood stains on his hand !  
He prays—the fool—God knows the deed he  
planned!”

Poor haunted wretch, he scarcely ate or slept,  
But like a girl hysterically wept  
As through his frame convulsive shudders crept.

One morning in the court-room he appeared,  
With haggard face, disheveled hair and beard.  
His nervous eye was piercing wild and weird.

Yet when he spoke his words were calm and sane.  
He only craved permission to explain  
The truth about that wealthy farmer slain.

You might have heard hearts beating all around,  
Or caught a falling pin's metallic sound,  
As point by point his startling tale unwound.

The case in full review from first to last,  
With marvelous lucidity was passed  
Before the Judge who listened half aghast.

For with a grief unspeakably intense,  
He saw the blunders of the weak defense ;  
And knew that Law had murdered innocence.

But when the speaker reached his closing word,  
The blood stood still in every one who heard,  
And in the silence no one breathed or stirred.

“ O Judge, I slew that man, I took his gold.  
Here in my hand the very bag I hold  
On which he wrote his name in letters bold.

“ I saw him hide the bag. With stealthy tread  
I went and took it; but before I fled  
He fell upon me and I struck him dead.

“And then with garbled evidence I built  
A cross on which the sinless blood was spilt  
Of him I slew to hide my other guilt.

“But I have suffered like the damned in Hell.  
Grant me a murderer’s sentence and his cell,  
And then a murderer’s death — and all is well.”

In time the charge of murder was preferred  
Against the wrecked attorney, and he heard  
With beaming face his sentence word by word.

The day of execution came and he  
Spoke for a moment from the gallows-tree:  
“O former friends, this hour of doom to me

“Is far the happiest and most sublime  
Of all the golden hours of all past time.  
For I today shall expiate my crime.

“And, Mr. Sheriff, I have one request:  
My dying statement lies here on my breast,  
Please have it read when I am laid to rest.”

Around his open grave from near and far  
Stood many former comrades of the bar,  
Who mourned the brilliance of his earlier star.

The Judge unsealed his dying words and read:  
“ Dear friends; since I am numbered with the dead  
Believe I beg you what herein is said.

“I did not kill the farmer, and I lied  
When I confessed his tragic homicide.  
May God forgive me, I was sorely tried.”

They could not read the rest, for every word  
By trickling blood had been forever blurred;  
The truth they craved could only be inferred.

And so the Judge above the shrouded bier,  
Reviewed the brilliant yet ill-starred career  
Of him whose grief was fatally sincere.

“We must believe,” he said, “if any man  
Will falsify and scheme by every plan  
To win the most disgraceful death he can,

“ That Conscience holds her cruel lash and rein  
Above his aching heart and fevered brain,  
And chains him to remorse with madd’ning chain.

“ Such sorrow ruled the dead, but who of us  
Would make atonement for our own sins thus?  
Enormous crime, repentance glorious!

“ Who slew the farmer we may never know;  
But surely it was not this son of woe,  
Nor yet the rustic whom he outraged so.

“ And now we lay his form beneath the sod;  
Dust will return to dust and clod to clod;  
His soul, death-shriven, let us leave with God.”

## THE SQUAW'S LULLABY.

Sleep, my little papoose;  
Thy father hunteth the moose;  
    For thee and me lie wanders long,  
His heart is brave, his hand is strong,  
His bow is mighty as the oak,  
His arrow is the lightning's stroke,  
    In vain the wild fowl shun his noose;  
Sleep, my little papoose.

Sleep, my little papoose;  
The hooting owl is loose;  
    The fawn is sleeping by the doe,  
The calf beside the buffalo,  
The turkey hen above her brood  
Is guarding lest the wolf intrude,  
    The gosling nestles 'neath the goose;  
Sleep, my little papoose.

## BOTHER BILLIE.

Little Bother Billie always wants a hand  
Into all my doin's. Can't yet understand  
How I ever managed, 'fore he came arouud  
Gettin' out the taters from the tater ground.

Little Bother Billie has a little hoe,  
Little tater digger, little wheelbarrow.

Buckles into diggin', works with lots o' grit;  
At it 'bout two minutes, thinks it's time to quit.

Stan's around an' jabbers 'bout a thousand things;  
"Do the crows dig taters? Why ain't we got wings?

What's the tater bugs for? Where's their house  
an' barn?  
Do the birds make mittens out o' spider yarn?

'Spect the' is some doughnuts on the pantry shelf.''  
Off he trudges jabb'rin' to his little self.

Mammy's jest a-fryin' of 'em in the grease.  
Back he comes a-nibblin' on his little "piece."

" Daddy, here's a doughnut Mammy fried fer you.  
Ain't got time to eat it? Got too much to do?

Shall I eat it fer you? Help you out? All right.  
Good by, Mr. Doughnut." Soon it's out of sight.

Then he opens fire on the hired man:  
" Peter, what is sparkin' with Matildie Ann?

Does she poke the fire when she wants a spark?  
Ain't you 'fraid, jest her an' you sittin' in the dark?

Mammy says that sparkin's loony-like an' soft;  
Does it hurt you like the grippe when you coughed  
and coughed?

Git some spark pills Peter from old Granny Nye,  
Don't git soft an' loony 'cause I'm 'fraid you'll die."

Then I drop my digger, can't hold in no more ;  
Pete gits red as fire, while I roar an' roar.

Bother Billie stan's there watchin' Pete git red,  
Makes a bee-line fer the house,—som'pin's in his  
head.

Dinner time : all eatin'; Billie brings a can:  
"Peter, here's them spark pills fer you an' 'Tildie  
Ann."

Me an' mammy's bustin', 'Tildie Aun an' Pete  
Look like wolves at Billie, innocent an' sweet.

All he says is, "Granny sent you these here pills ;  
Says if people take 'em sparkin' never kills."

'Tildie Ann she 'members 'bout some kitchen  
chores ;  
Pete he takes to coughin', has to git out doors.

Me an' mammy sits there holdin' of our sides ;  
Only Bother Billie peels the tater hides.

Evenin': Pete an' 'Tildie steals away to spark;  
Tired Bother Billie sleepin' in the dark.

Mammy sits a-patchin' overalls er blouse,  
Me a-sortin' taters at the tater house.

Pickin' out the biggest, tops the load so nice;  
Ain't quite fair, but—hang it—brings a better price.

Have to see if Billie's sleepin' safe an' sound.  
Kind o' lonesome workin' when he ain't around.

Goin' in his Mammy tells me what he said,  
Drowsy-like, a-layin' in his little bed.

Mumbled like a feller when he's sleepy does:  
"Daddy-he's-the-bestest-man-that-ever-was."

Them there words they stuck me like they was a  
sword.

Bet they was a warnin' sent me from the Lord.

Back I went a-flyin', to that tater bin,  
Big and little taters I mixed up agin.

Then them sneakin' feelin's took their cursed  
flight ;  
I could face my baby, face him day or night.

Went where he was layin', kneeled down by his bed,  
'Peared like the' was angels standin' round his  
head.

Moon was shinin' on him, he was smilin', an'  
Mumblein' at som'pin',—listen—“bestest-man.”

Then I made a promise ; needn't tell you whut,  
Only it has kep' me out o' many a rut.

Awful high opinion what he thinks o' me,  
But it's what I'm tryin' every day to be.

If my resolution I can only keep,  
Practice while a-workin' what he preached asleep,

Maybe them there angels from the shinin' shore,  
Will look out fer Billie when I can't no more.

“YE OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S  
FEET.”

Two men: I knew them well;  
They lived a mile apart,  
And I a mile from each.  
One fellowshipped with those  
Who hold the letter of  
The law ; the other with  
A sect that keep its spirit.

I have seen the first  
With towel girt, a basin  
In his hand, half-prostrate  
'Midst his co-interpreters,  
Each wholly bared of foot,  
Keeping, with hard exactitude,  
A custom to their age  
And land unknown, though once  
In honored vogue afar.

And I have seen the other,  
Take a Christian who had erred  
And help him crystallize  
His grief to real repentance.  
Then in the wronged and wrathful  
Congregation did he stand,  
And voice the sorrow of  
The sinning one, pleading  
For Christly kindness till  
The hardest heart gave way,  
The driest eye o'erflowed, and all  
Was love and restoration.  
Then I exclaimed: "It is  
My second neighbor who  
Has washed his fellow's feet."

## BROKEN RANKS.

Hurrah ! the heroes come again,  
To native land from far Luzon.  
Ye mountain tops awake the strain !  
Ye cliffs reply in thundrous tone !

Where long abuse revolt had bred,  
They went to give the isles release;  
To banish strife and in its stead  
To lay the corner stone of peace.

The eager soldiers march away,  
Before them danger, glory, death ;  
Hearts just as brave behind them stay,  
And wait for news with bated breath.

But, home again, their duty done—  
Unfurl the banner, beat the drum—  
They come; and yet, alas for one !  
With broken ranks the heroes come.

A mother far across the sea,  
Heavy with grief and blind with tears,  
Bewails the son who ne'er shall be  
The stay of her declining years.

Her gift surpasses tongue or pen,  
And challenges a nation's thanks.  
We bow our heads in reverence when  
The brave return with broken ranks.

## KEENAN'S LAST CHARGE.

Onward they dash with impetuous will —  
Stonewall is leading at Chancellorsville ;  
Leading the last of his whirlwind attacks,  
Routing the Bluecoats and hounding their  
tracks.

Madly they crush  
Through the dense underbrush,  
Vanquished and victors confused in the rush.

Silent the lips of the cannon's hot mouth,  
Silent before the implacable South.

How can a moment of respite be won !  
Time just to load and align gun by gun.

Keenan stands there !  
Will the brave fellow dare  
Rush to his doom that the rest may prepare ?

Sharp comes the order and quickly he said :  
"General, nothing but death is ahead,  
But I will check them." He galloped away,  
Into the teeth of the furious fray.

O what a sight !

Death as sure as the night !

Three hundred troopers ten thousand to fight.

Only a moment the brave little band  
Check the fierce onslaught of Jackson's com-  
mand.

Only a moment—but that is enough.

Pleasanton meets them with fearful rebuff  
Volleys of shell

Answer every wild yell;

Death meets disaster and Hell faces Hell.

Backward the staggering rebels are hurled,  
Freedom still lives in a slave-ridden world.  
Night soothes the furious passions of day.  
Silent the Johnnies at last steal away.

Horrible war,

Wilt thou never be o'er !

Keenan thy victim and must thou have more?

Keenan, forgive us for waiting so long;  
Glory is sometimes neglected of song.  
Laurels coquette with the brow of the brave,  
Fame often hides with the great in his grave.  
Hero uncrowned  
Thy renown shall abound  
Far as our voices can carry its sound.

# HEZEKIAH HAYFIELD,

SENIOR AND JUNIOR.

The Hayfields moved to Kansas in early days, and settled on a claim near the center of the State. Here Mr. Hayfield built a two-roomed sod house, and here the family have passed many days of industrious content. Early and late they have wrestled with the rich soil until they have compelled it to yield them a very fair competence. Mr. Hayfield loves his homestead, enjoys his unpretentious dwelling and does not care to be Governor. Mrs. Hayfield is equally content with their simple lot, her greatest pride being in her gilt edged butter, which has been praised and premiumed at every county fair for years. Simple, old-fashioned piety regulates the household and frugality is its watchword. The family is a numerous one, blessed with perfect health and a good degree of everyday intelligence.

## HEZEKIAH HAYFIELD SR.

[ One spring just before plowing time Mr. Hayfield went to visit a brother-in-law one county to the west. The two farmers agreed on most matters, but when it came to the question which is better, country or city life, they differed with vigor. The host said that as soon as possible he should sell his farm and move to town. Mr. Hayfield delivered himself as follows: ]

My neighbors Peter Perkins an' Ebenezer Brown  
Hev shook the farm dust off their feet an' moved  
away to town.

They're goin' to ride the Billy in the Sons o'Rest  
I guess;  
But they'll be sick o' loafin' round in thirty days  
er less.

O'course it ain't my lookout, but I swan it's hard to  
see  
How they can live, shut up in town the way  
they'll hev to be.

There's houses on both sides of 'em an' neighbors  
all around;

Can't hardly raise no garden truck, they'll hev so  
little ground;

Can't keep no pigs ner chickens er their neigh-  
bors'll raise cain;

Won't hev no eggs to sell, ner cheese, er butter,  
hay er grain.

It's allers been a puzzle what so many town folks  
do

To make a livin'; yit somehow they seem to worry  
through.

But there's nothin' beats the country if content-  
ment's what you like,

Where the bees is allers workin' an' the chickens  
never strike ;

Where the hogs grunt lazy music ez they waller in  
the mud,

While the cattle lay an' listen keepin' time  
a-chewin' cud;

Where the katydids an' crickets keep their drum-  
min' up all night,  
An' the larks begin their singin' in the mornin'  
'fore it's light;

While the chorus at the fish-pond run a sort o'  
music race  
With whatever else is singin', bringin' in their  
bull-frog bass;

Where the prairie dogs is barkin' ez they lay round  
in the sun,  
An' a blue streak paints the meador—some jack  
rabbit on the run.

An' the moonlight in the country is so mellow-like  
an' soft  
'Bout the time you store the sweetness of the sum-  
mer in the loft.

What a sight to see the apples ez they hang upon  
the trees  
Git to blushin' at the kisses of the sunshine an'  
the breeze !

How the watermelons chuckle when you thump  
'em in the patch ;

How the horses neigh an' whinner when you lift  
the stable latch.

How the turkeys strut an' gobble, how the guineas  
run an' screech,

How the roosters pitch their crowin' jest ez high  
ez they can reach.

O, to see the stock a-fattenin' an' their hair a-layin'  
sleek,

An' to see the feathers growin' ez the geese invade  
the creek;

An' to hear the corn leaves rustle every time the  
breezes blow,

An' to watch yer wheat fields whiten till they look  
like golden snow—

O, it's these things makes a feller think he's struck  
the promised land

Where there's streams o' milk an' honey runnin'  
over silver sand.

O, it's these things makes a feller hang around his  
timber claim,

An' it's these things makes the pleasures of the  
city seem so tame.

Go an' live there ef you want to, git yer little nar-  
rer lot;

Build yer brick er wooden oven, twixt two others  
jest ez hot.

But you'll find me in the country where I'm goin'  
to live an' die,

An' I hope it ain't all city round the Mansions up  
on High.

Fer I love the rollin' prairies as the sailor loves  
the sea;

One smooth Kansas quarter-section—plenty good  
enough for me.

## HEZEKIAH HAYFIELD, JR.

[Young Hayfield is twenty years of age—a lad in whom ambition and awkwardness are evenly balanced. He has always been on familiar terms with the plow, but has twice attended the State Fair and has become infatuated with city life as he has seen it. He takes issue with his father in the following language:]

They say thet the farmer is king of the soil,  
An' lives like a lord on the fruit of his toil;

Has nothin' to worry him, nothin' to fear,  
But jest keeps a-prosperin' year after year.

He has fer his partners the wind an' the rain;  
The sun scatters gold on his acres of grain,

An' keeps 'em a-growin' while he is asleep,  
An' loads 'em with wealth when they're ready to  
reap.

The farmer is only jest playin' at work;  
Not half so hard pressed ez the merchant er clerk.

This sounds awful nice, but I jest want to say  
That when you're a-farinmin' it don't work that  
way.

There's lots of things worse than the farm seems  
to me;  
An' yet it ain't half what its cracked up to be.

There's drought an' there's chintz bugs, there's  
hail an' there's rust;  
There's grasshoppers hatchin' right out o' the  
dust.

Yer sheep are a picnic fer coyotes an' dogs;  
An' cholera kills half yer chickens an' hogs.

Yer windmills an' pumps hev a lot o' mean tricks,  
An' lay awake nights jest to git out o' fix.

An' you are forever a tinkerin' away  
At things thet don't fetch you a nickle o' pay.

There's lots o' hard sweatin' fer all thet you git  
An' sometimes you sweat without gittin' a bit.

These folks thet think farmers live on the top shelves,

'The most of 'em never tried farmin' themselves.

In thinkin' the country lots nicer than town,  
They hev my opinions jest turned upside down.

In town you ain't tied to yer stock an' yer grain.  
You never hev hay layin' out in the rain.

You sit in yer office er stand in yer store,  
Jest watchin' the money roll in at the door.

They fetch you yer mail an' bring 'round what  
you buy.

They sprinkle the streets when the dust tries to fly.

An' ef yer front yard gits to pantin' fer rain  
You open the gear to a big water main.

There's somethin' to go to about every night.  
They out-shine the moon with their 'lectrical  
light.

It ain't very fer from yer house to the stores  
Where they hist people up on them elevators.

An' ef you ain't nothin' to do fer awhile  
But talk to some feller off two er three mile,

You jest turn a crank thet is hitched to a bell  
An' ring up the feller an' 'phone him a spell.

Last week they was tellin' at old Peter Jones'  
Thet they can see folks through them town tele-  
phones.

And somebody said thet they think pretty soon  
They'll talk to the man thet is runnin' the moon.

Now out in the country you don't see such things;  
You jest hear about 'em and wish you hed wings.

But people in town hev 'em always close by,  
An' livin' is jest like the Fourth o' July.

So I hev concluded from all I can see  
Thet life in the city is jest right fer me.

## PUNKIN PIE.

Say, Billie, when yer startin' off a-nuttin' with yer  
sack,

An' know yer goin' to git to feelin' holler 'fore  
yer back,

An' see yer mother puttin' up a lunch fer by  
an' by,

Why is it nothin' strikes you like the hunk  
o' punkin pie?

An' while yer huntin' fer the nuts, er somethin'  
you hev lost,

An' wishin' all the skeeters had got froze up with  
the frost,

It's funny how the crickets an' the birds an'  
squirrels try

To chirp an' sing an' chatter all the time 'bout  
punkin pie.

An' when you git to eatin', if you do the way you  
should,

An' tackle bread an' butter first and things that  
ain't so good,

What makes you jest ez hungry yit, an' pretty near  
ez dry

Until you git to workin' on yer piece o' punkin pie?

An' when yer done with dinner an' yer punkin  
pie's all et,

An' you can't help a-wishin' that you hadn't  
started yet;

O, ain't it nice to lick yer lips to scare away a fly,  
An' find a lot remainin' from that piece o' punkin  
pie.

Say, Billie, I've been thinkin' when I git to be a  
man,

I'll hev 'bout forty acres jest fer punkins ef I can.  
An' maybe I'll git married, but the girl that takes  
my eye

Must be a bird at bakin' when it comes to punkin  
pie.

## THE COWBOY POET.

Sharp Shooter Jim, a cowboy, roamed the wild  
romantic west;

Roughest of all his fellows and by far intrepidest.

Yet through his reckless nature ran a weird, poetic  
strain,

Which turned his thoughts to music as he galloped  
o'er the plain.

Of western rhyme and rhythm he devoured every-  
thing,

But often cried: "I'll bet you I can beat it all,  
by jing?"

At last he took the lyre and essayed himself to  
write,

Although his maiden efforts for a time were "out  
of sight."

But when at last discovered he was forced to own  
their coin,  
To let the others read them, and, in fact, himself  
to join

In their first presentation, for the fellow could  
recite  
Or thought he could, and often he would "elo-  
cute" at night.

He loved to spout from Riley, Field, Sam Foss  
or Eugene Ware ;  
And often for a gesture shot his pistol in the air.

And now his new departure fired up the broncho  
seer,  
Who said: "Jest give him rope, an' he'll out—  
Shakespeare old Shakespeare."

One rancher smoked in silence, but threw out the  
modest hint  
That Jim would be grey-headed, e'er he saw his  
rhymes in print.

This nettled his admirers and they urged him to submit

His verses to some paper—they were sure to make a hit.

A little town was starting off some twenty miles or more,

Which had a one-horse weekly run above a one-horse store.

The editor one morning at his desk—a dry goods box—

Sat sorting squibs of humor to be headed, "Kicks and Knocks,"

When in there came a cowboy looking diffident and shy,

As though almost persuaded that he'd better turn and fly.

"Good morning," said this Greeley—there was business in his tones—

"You want a year's subscription to 'The Texas Skull and Bones?'"

L. of C.

“ Not that, exactly,” Jim replied;—he spat, and gave a squint;—

“ I fetched some poetry along I’d like you fer to print.”

“ We seldom publish doggerel; beside, Sir, if we should

We’d get the stuff from writers who are recognized as good.

But if you’ll leave your copy here and call next week again,

I’ll probably have time to talk about it with you then.”

From underneath his pistol belt Jim drew a crumpled sheet,

With four unmated stanzas set to fitful rhymes and feet.

The editor reviewed them with a chafed and hurried glance,

And then returned them. They had been rejected in advance.

"We don't want stuff like that," declared the pusher of the pen.

"Why not?" growled Jim. "Because, Sir, it's not poetry, and then

"We're after news, not non-sense. Kindly call again, good day."

But Jim had no intention of vacating just that way.

His shyness now was anger, and his look was fierce and grim;

No white-shirt tenderfoot could make a laughing stock of him.

He took the slighted copy tingling with the rage he felt,

And pulled a seven shooter from his heavy pistol belt.

He aimed the weapon, cocked, at his insulter fair and square;

"Now tell me this ain't poetry," he shouted, "if you dare!"

"Don't shoot! We'll run your verses!" in alarm  
his critic cried.

"But be they poetry?" yelled Jim. The editor re-  
plied,

"You bet they are; they're forcible, impressive,  
and indeed,

We're short on copy and I think they're just the  
thing we need."

Jim showed his thanks as usual with his faultless  
pistol shot.

He sent a score of bullets through the ceiling in  
one spot.

The printer took his copy and within an hour's  
time,

They had the proof corrected on that rustic ranger  
rhyme.

Jim's lines appeared next morning and behold  
above his name,

A glowing introduction to the starry fields of fame.

Some larger paper saw it, and inquired if now and  
then

They might receive a poem from so bright a West-  
ern pen.

To-day he might be numbered with the rhymers of  
renown,

Had not a rival ranchman deemed it best to shoot  
him down.

But his example lingers and the way that he be-  
gun

Leaves room for vast conjecture as to what he  
might have done.

In life's uncertain contest brass helps many men  
ahead,

But when it comes to poets nothing takes the place  
of lead.

## THE SOD HOUSE IN HEAVEN.

Well, yes, it's sometimes pretty lonesome here,  
And mostly 'long about this time o' year  
When harvestin' is done,  
An' hayin' hez begun,  
An' early corn is hard'nin' in the ear.

You'd like to hev me tell you 'bout my past,  
An' why I'm all alone here at the last,  
So weak an' shaky-like?  
Why, yes, I'll tell you, Ike;  
It's mighty good of you to stop an' ast.

It's twenty year since me an' Liza caine  
An' settled down here on this timber claim;  
The land was wild an' new,  
An' neighbors they was few,  
An' all around here was a lot o' game.

I don't believe there ever was a king,  
Thet felt ez big ez I did 'long the spring  
Thet this sod house was done,  
An' Liza hed begun  
To fix it up with things she'd thought to bring.

O' course we made a pretty modest start,  
Fer wealth an' us was awful fer apart  
But still we didn't mind,  
Ef we was some behind.  
The latest styles fer we was rich at heart.

There's allers lots o' work when you begin  
To make a farm where grass hez allers been;  
But everything was bright  
With sort o' rainbow light,  
So I pulled off my coat an' waded in.

One day a chap that couldn't spell ner add  
Came round to see what sort o' board we had.  
I see he'd come to stay,  
An' wouldn't go away,  
Fer Liza was his Ma an' me his Dad.

I never see so pert a chap ez him,  
It looked like he was loaded to the brim;  
An' allers in fer fun,  
'Fore he could talk er run,  
An' so we called him Little Frisky Jim.

An' when his mother made him his first pants,  
You ort to seen that little feller prance;  
I half believed the child  
Was really goin' wild,  
The way he'd run around an' jump an' dance.

One day the wind got on a sort o' swirl,  
An' fetched around to us a little girl;  
We thought we never see  
Ez sweet a thing ez she,  
An' so we called her Little Sugar Pearl.

Well, neighbor, them two little ones so bright,  
They jest filled this sod house plum full o' light.  
I mended up their toys,  
An' helped 'em with their noise,  
An' used to hear 'em say their prayers at night.

An' Liza every special pleasant day  
Would send 'em out around the place to play.

I allers liked to see  
'Em come to bother me  
An' ast me things an' git round in the way.

On rainy days they hed to stay inside;  
But ef I hung around they never cried,

But said, "please Daddy please  
Git on yer hands an' knees."  
An' so I'd be a horse, an' they would ride.

An' that's the way things went about five year;  
We reckoned Heaven must be somewheres near.

Don't b'lieve the whole o' space  
Could show a happier place  
Than this sod house when all of us was here.

I somehow kind o' thought 'twould allers be  
The same sunshiney place fer them an' me  
Till, sudden like one day,  
Jim run away to play  
Up yonder, jest beyond where we could see.

Poor little Pearl! She wasn't much past four,  
But still she grieved fer Jim ez much er more  
Than Liza did er me,  
An' it was hard to see  
Her droopin'-like a-sittin' round the door.

An' by an' by, one still an' starry night,  
Her face so pale got more than common bright;  
An' raisin' up in bed,  
"Oh, Jim!" she softly said,  
An' then she foller'd to the Land o' Light.

An' there was Liza now an' me, heart-sore,  
Jest left again the way we was before  
Them little ones hed come  
To brighten up our home,  
Exceptin' that we loved each other more.

It seemed to me that Liza was my share,  
Ef part o' them I loved I hed to spare;  
But jest fer Pearl an' Jim  
God called her up to Him;  
An' maybe she was needed over there.

But after she was gone I couldn't see  
Ez it was much odds how things went with me;  
    An' so year after year,  
    I've jest been stayin' here,  
Half way betwixt what's been an' what's to be.

An' ever since the first o' this sick spell,  
I've half been hopin' thet I'd not git well.  
    I don't keer much to stay  
    With them all gone away,  
The place is lonesomer than I can tell.

Yes, thank you, Ike, I b'lieve I'd like a drink;  
I ain't no worse, jest kind o' weak I think.

    How bright 'tis everywhere!  
    What is it in the air?  
Why, Ike, it's flowers, blue an' white an' pink.

Jest listen! Can't you hear 'em sing somewhere?  
An' see that shinin' river over there!  
    An' near the glittering sands  
    A great big city stands;  
An' there's a flock of angels in the air.

Outside the place a piece yet middlin' nigh  
I see a little sod house, 'bout ez high,  
Ez this, but lots more trim;  
There's Liza, Pearl an' Jim  
A-beck'nin' me to come,—Dear Ike, good-by.

# Select Sunflowers

BY

HARRY EDWARD MILLS

PRICE, ONE DOLLAR

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FORT SCOTT, KANS.



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